

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 OMB-01 INT-05 DODE-00 PA-02 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-02 /056 W

----- 025504

R 150030Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 515

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

UNCLAS PORT MORESBY 0442

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EMIN, PP

SUBJ: SECOND DAY OF VIOLENCE AT BOUGAINVILLE COPPER

REF: PORT MORESBY 440

1. LOCAL PRESS IN EXTREMELY DISJOINTED ACCOUNT REPORTS RIOTS AGAIN BROKE OUT EARLY MORNING MAY 13. POLICE REENFORCEMENTS ARRIVING ON SCENE INITIALLY RESULTED IN INCREASED VIOLENCE FROM WORKERS WHO WERE LATER DISPERSED BY POLICE MOBILE SQUAD ATTACK. POLICE STONED, AND SEVERAL RECEIVED SUPERFICIAL WOUNDS. RIOTERS ATTEMPTED DRIVE BULLDOZER INTO POLICE RANKS BUT FAILED. SCORES OF VEHICLES HAVE BEEN SMASHED, RUN OVER CLIFFS, DRIVEN INTO RIVERS, ETC. (ONE ESTIMATE RUNS TO TWO HUNDRED VEHICLES) AND TOTAL DAMAGE ESTIMATED NOW AT ONE MILLION AUSTRALIAN DOLLARS. DAMAGE WOULD HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLY GREATER IF MINE OFFICIALS HAD NOT DEADLINED MUCH OF MINE S EQUIPMENT AND PLACED GUARD OVER MINE S EXPLOSIVE MAGAZINE.

2. ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN EVACUATED FROM MINE SITE. TWO EXPATRIATES REPORTED TO BE SERIOUSLY INJURED.

3. THREE MOBILE SQUADS BROUGHT IN FROM RABAUL ARRESTED MORE THAN 100 WORKERS WHO WILL BE CHARGED WITH RIOTOUS BEHAVIOR UNCLASSIFIED

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AND ARRESTS ARE CONTINUING. THERE ARE OVER 220 POLICE AT

SITE AND PRESS REPORTS THAT OVER 100 ROUNDS OF TEAR GAS
HAVE BEEN USED TO QUELL RIOTERS.

4. POLICE INTEND CONTINUE MOP-UP ACTION EARLY MORNING
MAY 15. BOUGAINVILLE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT QUOTED IN
PRESS AS STATING QUOTE WE GIVE THEM A LESSON NOT TO TRY
TANGLING WITH POLICE UNQUOTE.

5. DESPITE ASSURANCE THAT RIOT IS UNDER CONTROL, IT IS
FEARED THAT LOOTING WILL BE NEXT PROBLEM.

6. ECONOFF WAS PRESENT BOUGAINVILLE PERIOD 10-12 MAY ON
FAMILIARIZATION TRIP AND REPORTS DAMAGE AT MINE SITE QUITE
EXTENSIVE. STATES BACKGROUND POINTS LEADING TO RIOT ARE
AS FOLLOWS:

A. WORKERS ARE UPSET THAT THEY RECEIVED UP TO ONE HUNDRED
DOLLARS PER WEEK (FOR DRIVERS OF HEAVY EQUIPMENT) DURING THE
INITIAL CONSTRUCTION PERIOD OF THE MINE, BUT DURING THE
PERIOD SINCE MINE COMMENCED OPERATIONS, SALARIES HAVE BEEN
REDUCED TO FORTY DOLLARS PER WEEK. (MINE OFFICIALS INSIST
THAT THIS WAS DONE AT INSISTENCE PNG GOVT TO BRING MINE
WAGES MORE IN LINE WITH COUNTRY S TOTAL WORK FORCE).

B. CLERICAL STAFF AT MINE RECEIVED INCREASE IN JANUARY
WHILE MINE WORKERS DID NOT.

C. WORKERS IN ARAWA RECEIVE 22 DOLLARS PER WEEK WHILE
SAME CATEGORY AT MINE SITE RECEIVE 18 DOLLARS PER WEEK
PLUS FOOD. THIS IS EVIDENTLY CONFUSING TO WORKERS
ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS TO BE LOGICAL TO MINE MANAGEMENT.

D. WORKERS BELIEVE COMPANY INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS MANAGER
(AN EXPATRIATE) IS HOSTILE TO UNIONS, INSENSITIVE TO PNG
WORKERS AND PLAYS FAVORITES.

E. TROUBLES SPARKED BY SACKING OF UNION VICE PRESIDENT
LAST WEEK AFTER HE INVOLVED IN FIGHT AT COMPANY CANTEEN.
WORKERS BELIEVE UNION AFFILIATION WAS CAUSED OF FIRING AND
STATE THAT OTHERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN FIGHTS WITHOUT
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BEING SACKED.
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Message Attributes

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